GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:360
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MOBILE SERVICES OF MTNL AND BSNL
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Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the mobile rates of MTNL are at a par with the mobile rates of other private companies;

(b) if so, the position with regard to the use of MTNL service in comparison to other private companies: and

(c) the reaction of the Government on the functioning of mobile services of MTNL and BSNL?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD)

(a) The Telecommunication Tariff Order (TTO), 1999 provides flexibility to all cellular operators to fix tariffs. The cellular service providers are at liberty to offer alternative tariff packages to subscribers depending upon their usage pattern. MTNL and other cellular operators give a number of tariff options for their subscribers, and these vary in terms of combinations of monthly rentals, call charges and free call allowances. There are a large number of these alternatives and therefore it would be difficult to say whether mobile rates of MTNL are at par with rates of other operators.

Recently, TRAI has commissioned an independent study through The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi on the subject of tariff comparison for mobile telephony in Delhi and Mumbai. The results of the research study of TERI shows that MTNL mobile tariff plans are competitive compared with the tariff plans of other operators for some pre- defined user profiles in Delhi and Mumbai.

(b) As per the Performance Monitoring Report for the quarter ended December, 2004, MTNL (Delhi & Mumbai) mobile service is meeting all the benchmarks prescribed by TRAI. Presently, there has been an increasing demand for MTNL mobile service viz-Ã -viz private companies. The comparative position of MTNL's mobile subscriber base viz-a-viz private operators is given in the Annexure.

(c) MTNL is providing mobile service in Delhi and Mumbai metros only. MTNL is making continuous efforts to improve its quality of service and enhance progressively the capacity of mobile network. MTNL has now reached a subscriber base of 689521 as on 31-01-2005. MTNL is able to offer WAP, GPRS (General Packet Radio Service), MMS (Multi media Messaging Service) and other value added services at par with private operators. Whereas, BSNL launched its cellular mobile service all over the country w.e.f. October, 2002 progressively and within a short span of two years and 4 months, BSNL has already covered 583 out of 596 District Headquarters in the country and 3483 cities/towns in India including Tehsil Headquarters, National Highways, important Pilgrimage centers, tourist places etc. with GSM Mobile Service. Thus by reaching a subscriber base of about 87 lakh, BSNL has become second largest GSM based cellular service provider in India with around 21.8% market share as in January, 2005. The International Roaming facility was launched by BSNL on 29-01-2004. Presently, BSNL has roaming facility for Mobile in 185 countries with 360 GSM operators. BSNL is providing Voice and SMS over its GSM network in all its licensed Service Areas. Further, BSNL has launched GPRS and MMS in all Service Areas except West Zone (Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat Telecom. Circle Service Areas). In West Zone also, action has been taken by BSNL for launch of the said service in 2005. BSNL has also taken action for launching of EDGE (Enhanced Data Rates for GSM Evolution) for provision of high data rate, over its mobile network in 2005. As such BSNL and MTNL are keeping pace with the advancement in technology and providing latest services to their subscribers.

ANNEXURE

MOBILE SUBSCRIBER BASE AS ON 31ST DECEMBER, 2004

DELHI	MTNL	273450
	Bharti	1554429
	Hutch	1407243
	Idea	603336
	Reliance	1119145
	Tata	195012
	Total	5152615
MUMBAI	MTNL	321292
	BPL	1189750
	Hutch	1439568
	Bharti	646528
	Reliance	926366

Tata	147240
Total	4670744